



# Megiddo Message

WHITER THAN SNOW

Vol. 44, No. 1

January 12, 1957

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Percy J. Thatcher, Editor

A religious magazine, devoted to the cause of Christ and published for the dissemination of Bible truth alone, THE MEGIDDO MESSAGE will

- Strengthen your faith in the Bible
- Answer perplexing religious questions
- Give you courage for these uncertain times
- Help you live above the world's moral corruption
- Reveal to you how to develop a character acceptable to God
- Bring peace and stability to your life

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## LETTERS

### From a Ten-year-old

Dear B—:

I am going to tell you something about admitting mistakes. . . . No employer wants to hire a person who makes the same mistakes over and over again. Neither does God want a person in His vineyard who makes mistakes and does not admit or forsake them. The greatest error that we can make is to leave God's commandments and do what we wish.

Bright, Ont., Can.

F. B.

### Happier for the Truth

Dear Brother:

We who are away from the fountain head have a need of these letters to cheer us along while we work out our salvation. Truth has made my life much happier.

North Augusta, Ont.

G. H.

### Appreciation of Practical Truths

Dear Sister:

I do so appreciate the way the MESSAGE has of touching on the details of life, the trials to be faced, the obstacles to be overcome. The deep understanding of the frailty of human nature, and the loving exhortations to keep on fighting to the end. Verily a true humility searches out the veriest details of all that must be cast out of our lives, and overcomes them with the righteousness of God, even as His Beloved Son has shown us the way.

Warwick, Qld., Australia

A. B.

### Value Inestimable

Dear Friend:

I am not able to estimate, to the real value, the load of blessing to us since we got in touch with the Megiddo Mission. You are happy to be joined together around your little church.

St. Charles, Ont., Can.

C. T.

### Light for Dark Days

Dear Christian Friends:

It is such a blessing to receive your literature from time to time through the mail and my prayer is, God bless you as you work so faithfully in publishing the things of God.

When the day seems dark, the words sent to us from the Mission are a great light shining in our home to brighten and lighten the day.

I am beginning to feel it my duty more and more every day to tell to others what I have learned, casting our bread upon the waters, and begin first in the home teaching the children.

Eugene, Oregon

Mrs. C. S.

## Whiter Than Snow

**S**NOW—that spotless and beautiful adornment of northern winter which transforms mansion and cottage, the rolling plain and barren spectacle of hill and dale into a scene of transcendent beauty, where every bare-branched tree and naked bush, every awkward twig and shapeless stone has become an admirable ornament.

He who has never been blinded by the glare of its dazzling whiteness on every side, has missed a spectacle unimaginable in the warm south lands.

. . . . .

The penitent Psalmist sat musing on the rebuke of Nathan the Prophet, while his reawakened conscience burned over the sin of his dark deeds, in the matter of the murdered Uriah and his widow, Bathsheba.

Perhaps, through the hot tears that would not be quelled, he gazed out across the north country beyond which lay the mountains of Lebanon to which he might have wished to “flee as a bird” for the cooling atmosphere of their lofty summits. Then, lingering on this refreshing thought, he, in mental vision, gazed upon the white lines of snow which streaked the head of Mount Hermon, which stands at the southern end of the ridge. Hermon, as it towers above the border city of Dan and the fountains of the river Jordan, is the most beautiful mountain in Palestine or Syria.

The king, in his mind’s eye, viewed Hermon’s stately summit which perpetually glistens with dazzling snow, and his inspiration to goodness was stirred anew. The weight of his sorrow was eased with his revived determination to plead to heaven’s God for forgiveness. There, as he sank to his knees, his face upturned to Him who hears the brokenhearted, David spoke from the depths of a heart seeking release from his burden of sin. “Have mercy on me, O God,” he began, “according to thy steadfast love; according to thy abundant mercy blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin! For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done that which is evil in thy sight, so that thou art justified in thy sentence and blameless in thy judgment. . . . Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward being; therefore teach me wisdom in my secret heart. Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.”

The spotless purity of Hermon’s snow-capped peaks—that is what David longed to achieve, but he knew he needed the help of God. Continuing his prayerful petition, the king lifted his voice and entreated, “Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence, and take not thy holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of thy salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit. . . . O Lord, open thou my lips, and my mouth shall show forth thy praise. For thou hast no delight in sacrifice; were I to give a burnt offering, thou wouldst not be pleased. God’s sacrifice is a soul with its evil crushed; a heart broken with penitence never wilt thou despise.”

David was imploring for that thorough cleansing of heart and being that he knew could come from God only

and by the power of His Word. The stern chastening of Nathan, allowed to work effectually within, would cause him to wholly repent and thus turn completely from the evil of his doings. Thus by continuous daily practice of spotlessly pure and holy principles of living he would become *whiter than snow*. Whiter? Whiter than Hermon’s crested top? Yes, praise God! The snow may sometimes *appear* spotlessly white when, upon close inspection, small particles of dirt have been mixed in; but David wanted the *last* and *least* defilement, real or seeming, to be washed away; and to become *whiter than snow*.

Like Israel’s conscience-smitten king *we* need the mercy of God. And He gives full promise of that mercy if we comply with the terms which are but our reasonable service. Isaiah tells us, “Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do well.” If we desire holiness, we will wash our garments of character, wash every sin “with its clinging folds.”

When we have washed away the dirt, God will remove the stain. He promises, “though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.”

Like David, we need to be stirred in our heart’s deepest recesses to aspire to such spotless purity, with “the washing of water by the word.” That means character elevation, up, up, above the sordid, sullied things of earth, the sins which defile the soul.

The snow, as it falls from above, is unblemished in its whiteness. It is the smoke and soot of earththings that stain and besmear it.

There is a snow line above which the snow never melts and thus never loses its whiteness, but it is very high, thousands of feet above sea level, high above contamination of earth’s impurities. Those aspiring nobles who would attain and maintain spotless purity must therefore attain and maintain an elevated level of holiness in thought, word and deed far above that of the sea of nations. From lofty principles and high ideals they never descend below the snow line. Having attained to the rare atmosphere of “higher ground” they are no longer attracted by things of the “lower nature.”

Fine linen clean and white, washed to dazzling purity, is the clothing of saints who make up the righteous bride of Christ. We have heard that “impatience never clothed the righteous bride,” nor can any other sin. But “it was granted her to be clothed with fine linen, bright and pure—for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints.”

“White as snow” is the description of angel garments, as was said of the shining immortal who rolled away the stone from Jesus’ tomb, “His countenance was like lightning and his raiment white as snow.” He, like all of heaven’s shining hosts, had done the work of imitating the pure, white snow in his character habits during his mortal career.

Shall our garments become so clean, so white, so glistening with goodness, righteousness and purity, so unsullied with the smoke and soot of earthiness that we shall emerge so transformed in character then, as being *whiter than snow*?



## DEATH THAT IS BLESSED

THE beloved John—banished to exile on the Isle of Patmos for the testimony of the divine Word—was instructed to record a portion of what was revealed to him there for our learning, we who should follow after. How his comprehension of the plan of God must have expanded as the scroll of prophetic wonders unrolled before his sight, revealing the majesty and splendor of future events! How his being must have thrilled as his mental vision was transported far above and beyond the suffering of exile, as his ears were opened to the voice of mighty thunderings! There, in what became heavenly isolation, he received the Letters to the Seven Churches and envisioned the breaking of the seven seals; there, above the roaring sea as it lashed the jagged rocks, he heard the sound of the seven trumpets and saw a disclosure even of the throne of God!

From around the throne, four voices of angels, bearing each a message for his mortal brethren, instructed him to write. And he wrote.

Incorporated in the fourth message was a blessing pronounced upon those who, for the hope of partaking in the grand future and seeing and hearing the wonderful things which he was there privileged to hear and peer into, had died a death which was blessed of God.

"And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me," reads the account (Rev. 14: 13), "Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors: and their works do follow them." Oh, the Revelator heard a voice, which said, "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth." Yes, they are blessed, and they shall rest from their labors and their works do follow them. But how do they die? The unenlightened mind thinks that it means those who breathe their last, or natural death. But let us go to the record written for our learning and we shall find what death it is. There we find more than one kind of death is spoken of in the Bible.

### Three Deaths that are not Blessed

In Genesis 50: 26 we read: "So Joseph died, being a hundred and ten years old: and they embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin in Egypt." Joseph died because his strength abated and he wore out. This was *natural* death as a result of mortality. He died, and they embalmed him, and he was placed in a coffin in Egypt. *That death would not cause Joseph to be blessed.*

Then there is another death, spoken of in Eph. 2: 1, "And you hath he quickened, who were *dead in trespasses and sins*." That would not save nor bring a man any blessing, to be *dead in trespasses and sins*. That is the condition in which we were all found when we first heard the sound of Truth.

Still another death we find in Rev. 21: 8, "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the *second death*." Not literal fire, but *second death* as a result of breaking God's law. We might keep on in sin until the second death

would be our portion, but that death would not save nor bring a blessing. The second death is *penal* death, decreed as punishment to all who prove unfaithful servants to God. Neither of these three deaths brings a blessing to its victims.

### The Fourth Death — Blessed and Precious

But turn to Ps. 116: 15 and we learn of a death that is pre-eminent. "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints." Here is a death which is precious in the sight of the Lord. This is not natural death, to which all flesh, all earthborn creatures are heir; nor is it death in sin, which is the natural state of man unenlightened by divine law; nor yet is it second or penal death; but it is a death that is *precious in the sight of the Lord—death to sin*. We find something about this death in II Tim. 2: 11, "It is a faithful saying, For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him." This is the death that is precious in the sight of the Lord: if we die with Christ, just so surely shall we live with Him.

We turn to Col. 3: 3 and find Paul addressing his brethren *who were still alive*, and saying, "For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." He had some brethren who were *dead with Christ*. How did they have to die? Read the 20th verse of the previous chapter: "Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ *from the rudiments of the world*, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances? Touch not, taste not, handle not." That is the kind of death; we must come out from a world of sin and evil; and to become dead with Christ we must neither touch, taste, nor handle any of its doctrines or practices.

### How to Die to Sin

In Romans 6 Paul tells us further about this death that we must die in order to obtain the blessing and our works follow. He says: "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are *dead to sin*, live any longer therein?" Sin is the transgression of God's law, and how are we to become free from sin? We have to become *dead to sin* right now while we are living men and women. "How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?" This is the one baptism that is now binding upon the people of God. Under the apostolic commission they baptized with literal water; but now we have only this one baptism, which is dying to sin.

We find some instructive testimony in Matthew 20. When the mother of Zebedee's children came to Jesus, asking that her two sons be permitted to sit, the one on His right hand and the other on His left, in the kingdom of God, He said unto them, "Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" Here is a baptism that means more than simply going down into the literal water: it is dying to sin, crucifying our flesh, killing out the "old man," becoming dead to

the rudiments of the world. Jesus received the baptism of John, but He never received the baptism He commanded under the apostolic commission. But in this *one* baptism He became dead to sin and iniquity. Hence Paul tells us that we are "buried with him by baptism into death," death to sin, "that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." Every one who would partake of the eternal future blessings must die; and if we do so, we will rule every word, act and thought for hope of that abundant reward. Walking in newness of life is the *one* baptism. The old man is alive when we allow anger, wrath, malice, or any of the lusts and desires of the flesh to rule us; but when we rise to walk in newness of life, we put to death the deeds of the old man and our life follows a new and holier pattern. "For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall also be in the likeness of his resurrection."

#### The Crucifixion of the "Old Man"

Here is a baptism into death; and if we have the baptism and are planted together in the likeness of Christ's death to sin, we shall also have part in His resurrection. We might be baptized in water a dozen times, but it would have no saving power. But all who die to sin shall receive the resurrection and the blessing. "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed." What has to be crucified? "Our *old man* is crucified with him." What is our old man? In Col. 3: 7—10 we read: "In the which ye also walked some time, when ye lived in them." We walked in these evil ways one time. "But now ye put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth."

The "old man"—the old nature doomed to crucifixion—is alive as long as we allow any filthy communication to proceed out of our mouth. There is so much profanity, so much vile speech in the world, so much vain and foolish talking, so much morally degrading speech and song that must be silenced and banished. "Lie not one to another, seeing ye have put off the old man with his deeds." If we lie to one another, the old man is not dead. But there has to be a death, and we must "put on the new man, which is created in knowledge after the image of him that created him." That is the reason we need to store our minds with these wonderful testimonies and put them into practice, letting them govern us in all our life, for the new man is renewed in knowledge. That is the way we get the *one* baptism and die to sin.

#### The Death that Makes Free

We read more about the death to sin, in Romans 6: 7, "For he that is dead is free from sin." This is not natural death, for to be laid in the tomb will not free a man from sin; no, but if he dies to sin by putting away all wrath, impatience and every evil, then when natural death comes, he falls asleep free from sin and his works follow. He is found to be worthy of the blessing of life in the resurrection. "Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him." If we only die to sin as Christ died, we are assured, without a doubt, that we shall be free to live with Him in eternity. Unfettered and unbound by sin and death, we shall be free to enjoy

all the eternal blessings in Christ's everlasting Kingdom.

This Bible hope is made ours. "Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once." That death to sin preceded the death on the Roman cross which the Jewish rabble imposed upon Him. He was worthy of eternal life because He had already died to sin. Submitting to the will of the rabble by unflinchingly and fearlessly affirming that He was King, was merely His last act of obedience.

Paul tells us that it is not natural death, but says: "In that he died, he died unto sin once; but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God." To be of these blessed dead which die in the Lord, we must die the same death that Jesus died, become dead to sin. If we have crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts; if we have put away all wrath, anger, malice, hatred and evil speaking, and all filthy communication out of our mouth, then we have died to sin as Jesus died.

#### Some Examples Who Became Dead in the Lord

We often hear of persons who are getting ready to die; but what we are most anxious about, and what we are endeavoring to impress upon every mind, is the necessity of getting ready to live. Abraham died to sin, as we read in Gen. 17: 1, he walked before God and became perfect. Daniel of old died to sin, and his works followed him. Paul also died to sin, as we read in I Cor. 9: 27, he kept under his body and brought it into subjection, and he fell asleep with his good works following him, worthy to receive the reward in the grand morning of the Resurrection.

We turn to Heb. 9: 15 and read further of this death. "For this cause he [Christ] is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance." There has to be death, you see: not that Jesus had to die on a Roman cross, but it is of force only to those who die to sin. How deceived the world is to think this is the literal death of Christ!

We find that all who are permitted to enter into the eternal inheritance shall have to die this death to sin, for it says: "Where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator;" or, as it reads in the original, "the death of the one appointed." Every one called into this covenant must die to sin as Christ died. We can plainly see it is not natural death, for Paul says, "We shall not all sleep"; but all must die this death to sin. "For a testament is of force after men are dead"—ah! it says, "After *men* are dead." Not after a man, or after Christ, is dead; but "a testament is of force after *men* are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth."

When all have died to sin and perfected their character, it will be of force: or, in other words, when every one of those called out to serve God in this six-thousand-year day of salvation has completed the work, Christ will come and call them before Him; for as we read in v. 27, "It is appointed unto men once to die,"—not for Christ alone to die, but for *men* (men is a generic term signifying both men and women), for all must die, "and after



this the Judgment." There are two classes that shall stand at the Judgment, the faithful and the unfaithful, the sheep and the goats, and it shall be made manifest that the goats are all still alive in sin, but the sheep are *dead to sin* and shall be accounted worthy to receive the eternal inheritance.

Therefore, the evidence of Scriptural testimony teaches us that "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth," signifies those who kill out the old man and become dead to sin. They are blessed, and their works shall follow them and they shall live eternally.

The fourth angel's message had an especial dispatch for those who received the Apostle's word—even for us who live in the closing dispensation of man's probation. Notice the message reads: "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord *from henceforth*." The Apostle knew that the end of that age was at hand and that when he finished writing what was permissible of the stupendous scenes revealed to him, that the Holy Spirit power should be withdrawn, that angelic visitation and all open manifestation of God's miraculous power should cease. Thus all believers should walk—not by sight as throughout former ages—but *by naked faith only*. No more should signs and wonders confirm the Word. The written law was then to be finished. That was to be henceforth the full support of faith. But—the angel revealed—all from that time on who should die the death, overcome sin in all its tempting and wily guises, should merit a special blessing.

The R.S.V. gives special emphasis to the angel's promise: "And I heard a voice from heaven saying, 'Write this: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord *henceforth*.' 'Blessed indeed,' says the Spirit, 'that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow them!'" The death of His saints had always been precious in God's sight, but from "henceforth," the angel told John, they should be "blessed indeed"! This confirms the promise recorded by Paul (I Cor. 12:24) of more abundant honor to that part of the body (the feet who walk and carry the message by faith) who lack the Holy Spirit.

All who would witness in reality the materializing of the prophetic wonders viewed by the Revelator and the unfolding of the eternal promises, must die in the Lord while life and strength of mind are extended to do the work. "Now is the accepted time; behold, *now* is the day of salvation": therefore let us strive while we still have opportunity to finish the work, that that blessed eternal rest may be ours.

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It has been said that "a fixed, inflexible will is a great assistance in a holy life."

You can will to choose for your associates those who are devout and holy.

You can choose to read books that will stimulate you in your Christian life, rather than those that merely amuse.

You can will to use every means of **grace** appointed by Almighty God.

You can will to prefer a religion of **principle** to one of mere feeling; in other words, be determined to obey God regardless of opposition.

Be desirous to do the will of the Father, rather than thine own.

Wish always, and pray, that the will of God may be wholly fulfilled in thee.

## As the Twig is Bent ...

"If you plan for one year—plant wheat;  
If you plan for ten years—plant a tree;  
If you plan for eternity—grow character."

**W**ISE counsel indeed; for what is nobler than to grow perfect character which God can use throughout Eternity!

Many parents will go to no end of trouble to have a carefully tended garden. They will take the utmost care of a tree, that it may prove profitable in maturity. Many a housewife will spend hours upon a piece of blue china, trying to mend a crack and glue the pieces together. But that same person has neither time nor patience to instill Christian virtues into the minds of her children. Of course, blue china is very valuable; but children—well—they'll grow anyway.

There are farmers who will toil for years upon a grape stock that yields only sour and small fruit, and finally they will make it produce grapes which are both large in size and sweet in quality. Of course, grapes have a value. They are worth, say, ten or fifteen cents a pound; but who shall expect parents to toil with their children—vines planted for God upon which may grow clusters of luscious fruits?

A gardener knows only too well that to neglect the little plants and seedlings would mean that his labor would soon be in vain. Just a few days of carelessness and his plot would be as the field of the slothful, overgrown with weeds and thistles. *No labor—no profit!*

The trend today is to allow children to grow as they will, spontaneously free and unrestrained. We hear it often said that to develop a child's personality he must not be hampered and fettered by any rules of discipline. Thus wrote an unknown writer, ironically: "I must not interfere with any child, I have been told, to bend his will to mine or try to shape him through some mold of thought. Naturally, as a flower, he must unfold. Yet flowers have the discipline of wind and rain; and though I know it gives the gardener much pain, I've seen him use his pruning shears to gain more strength and beauty from some blossoms bright. And he would do whatever he thought right. I do not know—yet it does seem to me that only weeds unfold just naturally."

A sapling allowed to grow untended would soon return to a wild state and become no more than a scrubby semblance of a tree. It needs fertilizing, spraying, pruning and grafting to make it grow into a beautiful and productive tree. It takes drought and storms to severely test its rootage and its strength. The winds bend and twist that growing sapling till it is almost pulled up by the roots. Yet with all that straining and grappling with the elements, the sapling grows, not weaker but stronger and stronger. Every adverse circumstance only makes it send its roots deeper and deeper. *No discipline—no tree!*

Parents, children are tender little plants entrusted in your care during the season of their youth. If by persistence and careful watchfulness you instill obedience and sound basic principles of the Christ-life, you are growing men and women of character whom God can use throughout eternity. Someday your duty toward your child will

be ended. Through your efforts, will he be trained and disciplined as befits a child of God? He who molds a precious life, he who guides and directs a child's footsteps in the narrow way, is doing a greater work than he who grows a tree or works a garden plot.

Nourish the sapling—make strong the tree;  
What a child is—the man will be.

One of the hardest things for a parent is to discipline the child intelligently and understandingly. Because it is an unpleasant duty it is put off and put off; and the longer correction is withheld, the stronger grows the besetment, the deeper-seated the habit. Finally, to straighten out the situation, drastic action has to be taken, much to the pain and sorrow for both concerned. How much easier it would have been had the offense been nipped in the bud before it had a chance to grow. *No discipline—no character!*

A sapling is not growing straight? It has a tendency to lean to one side? the wrong side? What does the horticulturist do? He does not have any qualms about disciplining. From experience he looks to the end of the matter. He is firm with the sapling. He wants a straight tree, and he will have a straight tree. He does not wait until the tree is half-grown. Growing years are formative years, so he takes care of matters at the first indications



of perverseness. He packs the soil firmly about the roots. If that will not do it, he becomes a bit firmer. He ties the sapling to a stake, thus guiding it in the right direction. When an undesirable shoot appears here or there, he does not wait but applies the pruningshears long before the offending shoot becomes a limb. Nothing escapes the eye of the gardener, and so, little by little, the desired results are obtained.

Each child brings into this world characteristics which he inherited, some good and some bad. The goodness must be encouraged and nurtured, while the waywardness must be curbed and controlled lest it break out into a bad habit. Promoting good tendencies and weeding out the contrary ones will strengthen weaknesses and build up Christian virtues in time.

Wise parents correct their children firmly, but in love. If they demand respect and love they will get it. A child who obeys his parents will also respect and reverence the Creator.

Obedience is the secret of a happy life. Children are happier when they are taught to obey. They sense a note of security about the home where obedience is in order. There is no chaos or confusion where obedience rules the day. It confuses a child when one day he is corrected for a fault which is overlooked the next day. He is bewildered when he meets with strictness one moment and leniency the next. There must be consistency in child training. It gives them a sense of sureness that father and mother know best. In careful guidance, the little ones are made to realize that they belong to a family in this big world. They may learn also that they belong to God's family, and that He cares what they do and say at all times. *No obedience—no happiness!*

Beauty of character is developed by close fellowship with God. God-fearing parents transmit that beauty to their children by a godly example. Because they love their parents dearly, children copy them in all they do and say. How careful they should be to use self-control at all times! Unconsciously, through the home conversation, a child's likes and dislikes are governed. His prejudices, his outlook upon life, his aims and purposes, all are influenced by the example that is daily set before him at home. *No example—no purpose in life!*

Parents, some day your patience will be rewarded. Your children can now be as olive plants around your table, flourishing in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. And in the Eternity to come, they may bear the luscious fruits of the spirit for the Master's table, a joy to you and to the Lord.

Dear Lord, they are such tender little branches—  
These children Thou hast given us to rear!  
As the twig is bent, the tree inclines, they tell us;  
They are ours for shaping. Lord, we pray Thee hear  
Our earnest prayer for needed strength and guidance,  
To mold them by Thy life, O blessed Lord,  
That they may grow in wisdom and in stature  
Through Thy precepts and the teaching of Thy Word.

Early we would gather them about us  
To tell them of Thy never-failing care;  
To give them the assurance, the deep comfort  
And help that they can find in lifelong prayer.  
Lord, give us words, and guide our hands in shaping  
These lives for time and for eternity;  
Lord, help us in the rearing of these children,  
That they may live to serve and honor Thee.

Seventh of Series:

## VOICES FROM THE ROLL OF THE BOOK

### An Example of Unselfishness

—Rhoda

**F**ELLOW believers in the glorious faith of our Lord Jesus, Greetings! How good it is to communicate with those of like precious faith, those who are interested in the same eternal matters. You will know who I am when I tell you that I was the young maid who thought of others first. Because of my unselfish act, the account of it has been recorded in the Bible for all generations to read. Yes, the incident is written in the Book of Acts, and I am Rhoda.

To you who are followers of the Lord Jesus, I come out of the distant past to plead with you to cultivate the unselfish spirit. It pays to be kind, considerate and unselfish. Unselfishness has its reward in peace of mind and seeing others made happy. I have been rewarded a hundredfold in happiness, knowing that I have been a good example so as to encourage others to adopt the virtue of unselfishness.

Those of you who remember me will always connect me with Brother Peter's miraculous deliverance out of prison. We lived in the heat of the day of salvation, and those were terrible days. You see, we lived in days of active persecution. Our lives were in constant danger. We did not know from one day to another who would be slain next. We were hunted down like wild beasts. And for what? Because we dared to believe and follow after that humble Personage, the Lord Jesus Christ. Living in the cool of the day as you do, I wonder if you fully understand what we had to endure, and if you value your "calling" as you ought.

Yes, King Herod was a bitter enemy of the Christians, and so were many of the Jews. The king had Brother James put to death by the sword. To satisfy and please the wicked people, he had Brother Peter cast into prison. Would his fate be the same as that of Brother James? We were fearful. The churches needed him so much! We resorted to prayer. The Christians met in groups and prayed without ceasing for his safety.

How clearly I remember it all! It was late in the night, and all were absorbed in earnest prayer. It so happened that I heard a knock on the porch gate. Being the maid-servant, I went to see who it could be so late in the night. You can imagine my surprise and joy to find Brother Peter—yes, Brother Peter, knocking and calling for someone to open the door.

How happy I was to see him safe and sound! The natural impulse was to open the gate and usher him in as a surprise to the praying brethren. But no, I must share my joy immediately with them all. I rushed back into the room and told them that their prayers were answered: Brother Peter himself was knocking at the gate!

Try as I would, I could not make them believe me. "Rhoda," chided Brother Cleopas, "you know it cannot be Brother Peter. He is in prison and heavily guarded. King Herod is determined to kill him." But I kept on insisting that it was no one else that was standing there in the night. All this time the knocking continued.

Finally Sisters Anna and Abigail started out to see for themselves, and the others followed. You can imagine the excitement, the tears, and the rejoicing that followed. Then Brother Peter beckoned to us to be quiet, and he told us how the Lord had delivered him out of prison!

Oh, you of the latter days, do you grasp what I am saying? An angel of the Lord led him out of prison! A real, true angel of God had stepped in and saved his life. It made us realize as never before that God was working for us and with us. This incident was a wonderful faith-builder. It brought courage and faith to all the churches. If God was ready to send His angels to help us, we were determined to do all that was in our power. God was greater than King Herod.

But let me tell you the story of Brother Peter's rescue, as he told it to us. You see, the king was determined that Brother Peter should not escape. He had him placed under a guard of sixteen soldiers. That night, while the Church was praying for him, he lay in prison between two guards and bound by two chains. Suddenly a great light shone in the prison and an angel touched him. Think of it, brethren, it was a *real* angel!

The angel said to him, "Quick, get up!" As he rose, the chains fell from his hands. "Gird yourself and put on your sandals," the angel directed. This he did; and the angel then told him to put on his coat and follow him.

All this time Brother Peter thought that he was dreaming, and that he was seeing the angel only in a vision. But he followed—be it vision, or dream, or reality, he followed. The angel led him through one ward of sleeping guards, and then through another. Locked doors opened before them and not one soldier awakened. Soon they were out of the prison. When they came to the great iron gate that led into the city, those massive gates also swung open before them. Upon reaching the street, the angel disappeared. It did not take Brother Peter long to come to his senses and realize that the hand of God had rescued him from prison and death. He did not waste time but hurried to the house where it happened that we were all praying for him.

Oh, was not that a wonderful deliverance! God had further work for Brother Peter and so spared him in such a miraculous way. How it fired our hearts with enthusiasm and zeal to think that God sees, hears, knows, and understands our plight on all occasions! As we understood more fully the mighty part that God was taking in establishing His Truth upon earth through us poor mortals, our faith grew. It rekindled the feeble sparks so that faith blazed anew in flames that leaped mountain-high.

How I wish I could stir your faith to the same height and depth as we experienced that night! O brethren, the wonderful salvation that we were working for was far-off in our day. But it is so close in your day, even at the door. It is knocking, knocking at your hearts. The Lord has a work for you to do, too. If you do it well, He will use you for noble work throughout Eternity.

Friends, brethren, I must be on my way now. I beg and entreat every one of you, cultivate that unselfish spirit, won't you? I am hoping to meet you all in the soon-coming Kingdom where all selfishness, greed and lust shall be gone. Live nobly and grandly in these last days so that we can all participate in the Lord's work of the future. Farewell.



## Musings of the Editor

**B**ENJAMIN FRANKLIN wrote, "Virtue is not secure until it becomes a habitude, and is free from the opposition of contrary inclinations." Possibly he erred on the side of idealism in this statement, for as long as life lasts we shall be subject to temptation; we shall be conscious of the "opposition of contrary inclinations." But with the habits of righteousness stronger than these inclinations, virtue can be secured. We need not allow ourselves to be overcome by evil,

**HABITS** even though we cannot remove it from our sight or consciousness; we are masters of our fate, captains of our souls, and can rise above temptation if we will.

But, sad to say, experience teaches us that good habits are much more fragile than bad. They require constant care and attention; eternal vigilance is the price of safety. Evil habits, like weeds, require no cultivation—only neglect.

According to a Chinese master of learning: "If the superior man abstains for three years from the observances of propriety, those observances will be quite lost. If for three years he abstains from music, music will be ruined." Even so, by neglect, the law of God and the rewards we might have obtained may easily be quite lost to us, even after having made progress in our more active moments. And the time will come when our neglect will prove our ruin, as the Prophet solemnly warns us: "Give glory to the Lord your God before he cause darkness, and before your feet stumble upon the dark mountains, and while ye look for light, he turn it into the shadow of death, and make it gross darkness." Then he shows the impossibility of changing habits at this late date: "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil." We must form the habit of doing good before our feet stumble upon the dark mountain, for then it will be too late to change.

Let us, after gaining a victory, so safeguard it by habits of virtue that we will not lose our winnings at the first counter-attack by the enemy. Let us proceed cautiously, bearing in mind that we cannot follow the desires of our heart until we have exchanged our naturally deceitful heart for the "new heart and new spirit" which the Lord gives to those who seek for it in His way. When we have secured this new heart which is free from the opposition of contrary inclinations, we shall be worthy of a place in God's eternal Kingdom where sin cannot intrude to beguile and where right doing will be the habitual, spontaneous action of every inhabitant.

## The Twenty-third Psalm

The 23d Psalm gives a mental picture common to the pastoral people of Bible times and familiar to us all, of sheep contentedly grazing on green pastures. As in John 10, Jesus is illustrated as the Shepherd, and we the sheep. With Him as our guide, we shall never be in want for spiritual food or the natural either (Matt. 5:6; Ps. 37:25). The pastures are always green; there is plenty to eat.

He leads us by "still waters"; that is, hearkening to His commandments brings peace like a river (Isa. 48:18), not like the waters of the wicked which cast up mire and dirt (Isa. 57:20).

"He restoreth my soul": "And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins" (Eph. 2:1). His Word quickens us (Ps. 119:50), brings life to the spiritual man.

When we come under the "shadow of death" we shall fear no ill if we have followed Him in paths of righteousness, for He will still be with us in the promise of a resurrection at the last day (Luke 14:14).

The chastening "rod" brings "comfort" to those who yield to the correction (Heb. 12:11).

"Thou preparest a table before me": "Ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils" (I Cor. 10:21). His table is set with the "bread of heaven," "water of life," "sincere milk of the word," "strong meat," "fruits of the Spirit," and the "wine" of Wisdom—plenty to feast on.

"Thou anointest my head with oil," that "excellent oil" of Ps. 141:5. When the righteous smite us, we will count it a kindness because it keeps us in the pasture of the Lord, prevents us from straying away.

"My cup runneth over." There is nothing more to be desired, a "hundredfold" in this life and life everlasting in the future. "In thy presence is fullness of joy." "They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house" (Matt. 19:28; Ps. 16:11; 36:8).

The Lord's mercy and goodness follows us all the days of our life as we repent and turn from sin; and in that future day we shall be privileged to dwell in or be a part of that house of the Lord that is to be established in the top of the mountains when the law goes forth from Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem (Isa. 2:2-4).

**G**OD hath called us to peace," wrote the beloved Brother Paul in his first epistle to the Corinthians.

And having read the story of Paul's life, we know that he found his peace in the most surprising and unlikely-looking places. Be it the prison cell, the dungeon, in shipwrecks, in pain, sorrow and tribulations, he made every circumstance of life a new source from which to draw his peace.

How many times we have longed and prayed for peace to come into our troubled and turbulent lives, when the things that make peace lay wasting and unused at our fingertips!

We can never have true peace as long as our inner self is in conflict with our outer self. In keeping up our external fronts only, we develop a strain of pretense which proves fatal to our peace of mind. If we use up our energy to conceal our inner emptiness behind a pretentious front—the struggle to maintain a reputation at variance with our true character—we become as a house divided against itself.

If we would live at peace with ourselves and others about us, we must quicken our conscience by the holiness of God; feed our mind continually with the wholesome truth of God; purge our imaginations with the beauty of God; open our hearts to the love of God; devote our life to the service and work of God.

Until we get the courage to be honest with ourselves and to live above the pretense and sham, we shall fail to have that peace of mind which Paul described as a condition that passed understanding. It is a condition that cannot be expressed adequately in words; it can be experienced only.

# Meditations

## On the Word

"When wisdom entereth into thine heart, and knowledge is pleasant to thy soul, discretion shall preserve thee, understanding shall keep thee" (Proverbs 2: 10, 11).

That life at its best is exceedingly short is common knowledge, and for all that men may do, there is no escaping this reality. For centuries, even millenniums, wise men have contended, as it were, for words or a description which best signifies man's vanity and frailty. A Greek proverb said, "man is a bubble"; Homer called man a "leaf, the smallest and weakest piece of a short-lived, unsteady plant." Another termed him "a dream of a shadow." The Apostle James likened this short abode to a vapor that appears for a moment and then vanishes.

He who would spend the days of his life in such a manner that it may be fittingly considered "living" must early learn this lesson, and, learning it, he must apply his heart to wisdom (Ps. 90: 12). For not until our lives are filled with wisdom and directed by it can we follow even a reasonable course in life.

The term "wisdom" is interpreted in various ways, but our interest at present is the wisdom of God which is "to depart from evil" (Job 28: 20, 28). We do not for a moment discount the value of the wisdom in the many fields of earthly endeavors. That wisdom has a vital part in this world and fills an essential need. But the wisdom of God must accompany our learning and experience in this life; and the two, when properly mingled together, make a pleasing combination.

It is a sad day in a person's life when he prematurely considers himself to have reached manhood, and therefore capable of directing his course through life without assistance from man or God. His legal age does not make him a man of wisdom. His freedom from discipline, his laxity in controlling passion, his choice of vice, and a denial of nothing to his appetite, show indeed a lack of discretion. His doing of the things of which he will be ashamed and his development of dangerous habits make him no more than a beast before God. One evil deed leads to the next and one habit is followed by another till he is dead in trespasses and sins, from which a return to a godly life is most painful.

Those individuals are most fortunate who are reared from infancy in the precepts of God and thus are best prepared to face life's problems. With the proper education and training in obedience they easily develop into youths who are chaste and temperate, modest and industrious. They can then proceed to sober manhood and pious old age. If they have thus lived they shall soon be ready for the change to the better and immortal life.

Unfortunately, the habits of carnality are well formed in most people before they begin to reform their lives by Christian standards. The transforming process becomes easy to our souls in proportion as the wisdom of God is pleasant to us. When the doing of God's will is a delight and we are careful not to set our life back in the account of God by intermingling forbidden practices, or

contracting wrong habits, then we can proceed from one triumph over wrong to another. We can by-pass the follies that often bring men to the regions of irrecoverable sorrow.

Discretion and understanding are most necessary in every circumstance of life, for critical situations arise which require sound choice and decision. Consider, for instance, some of the common character weaknesses with which all must come to grips. We speak of the shortness of time, or complain our days are few, and so it is, but we act as though there would be no end to them. We spend in waste what God gives us in plenty. We sacrifice our youth to folly, and our manhood to lust and rage, our old age to covetousness and self-righteousness. One can hardly claim to be discreet when he feels he should live for God when he is about to die; giving that time of his life to virtue which is unfit for anything else.

God wants the best, always. He wants the vigorous and healthful years of our life for His service. If we would devote to wisdom those periods of our lives which are trifled away upon vain sorrow, foolish mirth, or day-dreaming; if we would seek understanding in spiritual matters in the time we lose in coveting nonessentials, in gossiping, in idleness, or because of our enslavement to a senseless habit, our life would quickly amount to a treasury of wisdom.

To every trying situation wisdom will furnish an answer. Through wisdom men are distinguished from fools and through it they may rise to the nature of angels.

The man whose life is directed by wisdom places a proper value on all things. This man will not despise riches simply because he does not have them, nor will he set his heart upon them if he has. He can look on another's possessions, abilities, or good works, as pleasingly as though they were his own. If good fortune, or ill, be his lot he will bear either in the proper spirit.

Wisdom directs us to live humbly. God is Omniscient, therefore we with our limited understanding should realize that at best our works are mediocre. Keeping our conscience pure and void of offense before God will be our daily thought, and whatever we do we shall not do it for the sake of public opinion. We will learn to be watchful of our thoughts as of our actions on a busy street, and contrive our secret affairs as before God.

When we are equipped with the wisdom of God we can face the world undismayed, unafraid; living in the world but not being a part of it (John 17: 16; II Cor. 6: 17, 18). The world, being what it is, provides the field wherein we may develop the most worthy characters. The Christian life cannot be lived on easy terms. Jesus taught and demonstrated this. "In the world ye shall have tribulation..." He said. We cannot escape the intrinsic horror of sin and evil, it is all about us, yet we can confidently live above its corroding influence. We can live each day in gratitude that the wisdom of God and the example of Jesus can enable us in these troubled times to live each day with purpose and courage, serenity and hope.

"Wisdom is the principal thing," said the Wise Man. Get it above all else. Let it become a part of your very being. There is no substitute for it. Friends may fail you, riches may vanish, honor may fade, but the true wisdom of God no man can take away. It is a part of you, it is your character. It will keep you at your best through life and fit you for the unending life promised by God.



# Your Questions Answered

**BIBLICAL**

**PERSONAL**

**CURRENT**



Do you have a question? Personal replies to Biblical questions will be sent to any correspondent, and counsel will be offered on problems pertaining to the spiritual life. The MEGIDDO MESSAGE will publish only the most helpful discussions for the benefit of other readers. No names shall be mentioned.

**Explain I Peter 2: 24, "who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed."**

To understand the meaning of this verse, we first must know the definition of the word "bare" from the original Greek in which the New Testament was written. It is, "to be carried to a place of safety." The Apostle Peter had just told us in the 21st verse that Christ suffered for us, "leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps." If we do follow Him, then He will carry us to safety, to the "tree of life." The marginal reading of "on the tree" is "to the tree." If we have become "dead to sin," as is qualified right in the text, He will then lead us to that tree. The false teachers have tried to explain this verse in a pleasing way to relieve man of responsibility, saying that Christ did the work for us. But even after Christ received His own reward and was with the Father and the angels, He wanted us to realize that we must repent and do His commandments to have right to the tree of life, to which He will lead us if we have lived "unto righteousness" (Rev. 2: 5; 22: 14; Prov. 3: 13, 18).

The definition for the word *stripes* is "to tie or join together, to connect or bring into fellowship." Turning from sin is what brings us into fellowship with God and His Son, (I John 1: 6; John 14: 15, 21). Thus we are healed of sin now (Ps. 107: 20) and in the future when Christ leads us to the tree of life we shall be healed of all physical ills (Isa. 33: 24; Rev. 21: 4, 5).

**Is there any reference in the Bible to World Wars II and III?**

None whatever, only the words of Jesus as found in Matt. 24: 6, 7, "Ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom," etc.

However, the Bible plainly foretells the Battle of Armageddon, a righteous war in which Christ at His coming will conquer the powers of earth. Read Rev. 16: 16; 19: 11, 19; 17: 14.

**Please explain Matt. 16: 19, "And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."**

Christ was offering to all who would accept it, the "key of knowledge," which opens "the door of faith" (Acts 14: 27), and is the means of entrance into God's future Kingdom, which the Jewish nation, in their apostasy, had taken away. Read Luke 11: 52.

Why is this knowledge of the way of salvation termed "keys"—plural? Because the wisdom of God's saving truth is a collective term; it incorporates many commands and specifications, all of which are necessary to open the way to salvation.

Moffatt clarifies the last of the verse: "Whatever you prohibit on earth will be prohibited in heaven, and whatever you permit on earth will be permitted in heaven." In other words, whatsoever is permitted in the Church of Christ where Truth is governing, will be permitted in

the world to come. On the contrary, anything which is condemned as wrong here will likewise be condemned there. The same high standard of holiness which is maintained in the true Church will be retained in the world to come.

**Do the Jehovah's Witnesses teach a false doctrine?**

Yes, they do. For instance, they teach that Christ is now present on earth but will never be seen in His bodily form. However, the Bible says that His coming shall be as plain as the "lightning that cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west"; "and every eye shall see him" (Matt. 24: 27; Rev. 1: 7). Jesus knew people would make such claims, and He warned us to be on our guard against them. "If any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there: believe it not. . . . Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers; *believe it not*" (Matt. 24: 23, 26). The Bible is against such teaching, so it is of necessity a false doctrine.

Their teaching of a literal devil, a monster with an enormous tail, is no less false, as are many other of their doctrines. See James 1: 13—15; Mark 7: 21—23; John 6: 70.

**Is it true that some people know the Bible but don't know Christ?**

Certainly. It is possible to have a good understanding of Bible principles and still not transform that knowledge into practical daily action. To know Christ is to follow His example.

**Is it true that we all have to go from door to door to preach the good news of the Kingdom in order to be saved?**

There is no such command given in the Bible. It is a good work if one is qualified, has sufficient knowledge, and can spare the time and means to do it. Age, ill-health, or other circumstances, might prevent. Talents differ, as Paul tells us (Rom. 12: 6—8); some might be able to help the cause of Christ more in other ways. There is an example given in Acts 6: 1—4 to show a difference in duties that can be performed.

It is true that we are to cast our "bread upon the waters" and to let our "light shine," but there are other ways of doing that than to carry the Truth from door to door. Our light shines brighter by a modest example and by chaste conversation in our daily life than in any other way.

**Does Eccl. 3: 11 refer to literal creation when it says, "No man can find out the work that God maketh from the beginning to the end"?**

While it is true that man cannot solve the wonders of the literal creation, the deeper thought here is the spiritual, the new creation which is described in the first three chapters of Genesis. "We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them" (Eph. 2: 10). This is the creation of the multitudinous man, the body of Christ, which is made in secret, unknown to the world (Eph. 4: 24; Ps. 139: 14—16). That the world in general is ignorant of the work which God is doing in taking out the Bride of Christ is evidenced in the fact that His second coming will overtake them as a thief (I Thess. 5: 1—6).



## THE GLAD REALITY

I long to see that City where our blessed Lord shall reign,  
And hear the angels singing there a glorious refrain.  
I long to see that City, with its streets of purest gold,  
And with ecstatic joy its walls of precious stones behold.  
I yearn to sit beside the crystal stream that through it flows,  
And there experience the thrill that the immortal knows,  
Of quaffing its life-giving water, from it gaining strength  
To vie with angels as they span the universe's length.

I dream of sitting underneath the tree that flourishes  
Upon its bank, whose spreading roots the water nourishes;  
Whose leaves are for the healing of the nations that obey,  
And bow in meek subjection to the King that there holds sway.  
In reverie I reach to pluck the luscious fruit that gives  
Eternal life and happiness to every one who lives  
As God commands, o'ercoming sin; but as I fain would take  
It in my grasp, the vision dims, and I am wide awake.

That City which I long to see, for which I work and pray,  
Needs not to bar its gates by night; there it is always day.  
The gates are always opened wide, for nothing can molest  
Within that quiet, peaceful haven where the faithful rest.  
No sound of battle greets the ear within its lovely walls;  
No dens of vice are ever found inside its spacious halls.  
No slab of granite marks the place where some poor stranger lies,  
For all is health and vigor there, and no one ever dies.

To think of seeing Jesus as He sits upon His throne,  
And hearing from His lips the words, "These children are my own!"  
Is worth far more than all the gold or silver one could gain  
In this short life that's filled with disappointment, grief, and pain.  
To think of living in a land where evil is subdued,  
And everybody that you meet is in a pleasant mood;  
Where Death is banished from the scene, and partings are no more,  
Fills me with longing to be there when this short span is o'er.

Oh, glorious City of our God, that John on Patmos saw;  
Reserved for all the faithful ones who keep His holy law!  
To enter through Thy portals is a goal that all should claim.  
No worldly pleasure that is sought is worthy of the name.  
This shall be my endeavor, to so walk from day to day,  
That I may be approved of Christ, to dwell with Him alway,  
Within that glorious City, there His faithful servant be,  
When all my dreams and longings are a glad reality.

—L. L. S.